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SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH US AMBASSADOR LINO GUTIERREZ; VENEZUELA'S  
ENTRY INTO MERCOSUR; ARGENTINE'S PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN HAITI; NORTH  
KOREAN MISSILE TESTS; US DECISIONS ON IRAQ; US-ARGENTINE TIES;  
MIDDLE EAST 07/05/06

## 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Major papers cover extensively the Fourth of July reception held in the Ambassador's residence in Buenos Aires. Liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald" carries an interview with US Ambassador Lino Gutierrez who underscores that "US-Argentina ties are stronger regarding drugs, terrorism, tourism and scientific research," and that he hopes for free trade "from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego." Other international stories include Venezuela's entry into Mercosur; the philosophy behind the stay of the Argentine peace-keeping force in Haiti; North Korea's missile tests; the impending US decisions on Iraq; the status of the US-Argentina bilateral relationship; and the situation in the Middle East.

## 2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Gutierrez: US aided recovery in Argentina"

Michael Soltys, executive editor of liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," interviewed US Ambassador Lino Gutierrez (07/04) "In his last month as US Ambassador to Argentina, Lino Gutierrez steers clear of viewing US-Argentina ties as an either/or proposition, outlining various levels of relations progressing at different speeds. He refuses to accept last November's Americas Summit in Mar del Plata as a failure and lays any setbacks at the door of Mercosur rather than Argentina.

"... 'Relations have been very co-operative. Let us not forget that Argentina went through the worst economic crisis in its history... I am glad the US has been able to contribute to the recovery in those three years.

"'We have also been able to cement our excellent cooperation in the problems we all have to face in the post-Cold War world such as terrorism. We continue to work very closely with Argentina. We are now expanding into areas like money-laundering, terrorist financing where we have been able to provide training to government and bank officials, private banks, etc.

"'We are certainly disappointed that the FTAA has not advanced, as we had hoped it would. We all know that the Mercosur countries have decided that they are not ready right now to continue negotiations without addressing somehow the issue of subsidies for agriculture. We have pointed out that this issue is being discussed at the WTO with a very concrete proposal on the table that would reduce subsidies significantly in the next few years. The EU has not accepted this. We are hopeful that something can be worked out but we do not think the negotiations should stop because of that.

"I just think that at Mar del Plata 29 countries did stand up and say 'We want FTAA' and that helped advance the process... So we will continue to negotiate agreements advancing free trade in this hemisphere and hope that at the end of the day we will have free trade from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. We will advance wherever we can.'"

- "Venezuela's entry into Mercosur"

Leading "Clarín" carries an op-ed piece by Carlos "Chacho" Alvarez, head of the Mercosur Permanent Representatives Committee, who opines (07/04) "Venezuela's entry into Mercosur is one of the most significant events in the history of the sub-regional integration institution."

"For the first time since Mercosur was founded, a new State has been incorporated as a full member. The participation of this country will present new challenges that could contribute to regional integration."

"... Another favorable piece of information is Venezuela's contribution against the asymmetrical struggle. There would be no reason why legitimate claims from minor partners, like Paraguay and Uruguay, be dismissed by the three largest South American economies. Therefore, it would not make sense for these countries to sign FTAs with the US, which would limit their margins of autonomy and work against the Mercosur custom union."

- "Haiti and the progressive myth"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" carries an op-ed piece by Gabriel Tokatlian, professor of International Relations at Universidad San Andres, who writes (07/05) "The Argentine Congress is being delayed from considering legislation that would allow Argentine troops' continued deployment in Haiti..."

"... The performance of the Argentine (peacekeeping) force in Haiti has been highly professional; however the problem the UN delegation has is in regards to the nature and purposes of the Argentine troops."

"I am afraid that our extended stay in Haiti will increase the likelihood of establishing and legitimizing a new protectorate, not necessarily in favor of the weak, poor and excluded..."

"At the beginning of the 20th century, Latin America, and particularly many Argentine thinkers and diplomats, decisively contributed to establishing support for the principle of non-intervention... At the beginning of the 21st century, Latin America, and particularly some Argentine experts and decision-makers, seemed willing to bury it without fully understanding, more in favor of what they are currently doing."

- "On maximum state of alert, the US calls North Korea's action a 'provocation'"

Alberto Armendariz, New-York-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," comments (07/05) "The US identified the missile tests performed by North Korea yesterday as a provocation of the Kim Jong Il regime..."

"According to governmental sources, the tests of several missiles were carried out to coincide with the celebration of the Fourth of July and the long-expected launching of the Discovery shuttle in Florida."

"As a matter of fact, the US Pentagon was not surprised by the tests, which have been expected for several weeks now, and Pyongyang itself had given signs that it would continue testing missiles in spite of international pressures."

- "A complex and tough player"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (07/05) "... What Kim Jong-il wants with this war game that disrupts the Asian security system, is for the US to resume its delivery of

food and oil that was agreed on in 1994 with Bill Clinton in exchange for abandoning its nuclear plans. This deal was never carried out and ultimately, North Korea's aid was frozen and then the country was labeled as a member of the 'axis of evil', and crossed threats occurred."

- "The US - riddles of yesterday and today"

Fabian Bosoer, columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (07/05) "The US has just celebrated its 230th anniversary of independence revisiting the same question as in the past - what is the relationship between independence, sovereignty and freedom in the particular case of a remote country and people whose destiny has lain in their hands for three years."

"With the invasion of Iraq as a backdrop, the question remains 'How to get out of the bothersome status of occupying a country and letting the occupied country start writing its own history free of influence?..."

"On the one hand, we have what analyst David Brooks defined in The New York Times as a division between 'populist nationalism' and 'progressive globalization'. There is a new division - those who propose 'to return home,' thereby declining imperial, liberalizing or democratizing ambitions while maintaining foreign policy as an expression of national security, versus those who see the need for reorienting foreign policy through international intervention led by diplomacy ('soft power') in order to reverse the negative image of international public opinion on the war in Iraq."

- "Buenos Aires-Washington - a relationship with different languages"

Jorge Sosa, political columnist of business-financial "El Cronista," writes (07/04) "... The US-Argentine relationship has been marked by back and forth movements. After the tension heightened at the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas over the FTAA, US Ambassador Lino Gutierrez was able to resume dialogue with the Argentine Government. The help of US Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Tom Shannon was crucial along with a strong dose of friendly diplomacy."

"From that point forward, there were no problems, until President Kirchner addressed the Spanish Congress, there he blamed the US for scrimping support for our country at the worst point of its crisis,

defended Chavez, and claimed that the White House is not offering a 'beneficial (trade) integration process' to Latin America."

"... Putting speeches aside, language also sounds different on sensitive economic issues. According to the Argentine Government, its priority in the US-Argentine ties will be winning US direct investment, particularly in the services area, leaving FTAA issues on the back burner. On the other hand, the new US ambassador to Buenos Aires, Earl Anthony Wayne, has told US senators (who must approve his nomination) that his priority will be to seek a 'favorable and secure framework for investment.' The patents issue was discussed, and the Monsanto case was raised. And even though it was said that the FTAA project is still in process, Wayne confirmed the plan to continue negotiating FTAs with other countries of the hemisphere."

"The future point of debate will be Venezuela's desire to reform the UN Security Council, which is crucial for the US."

### 13. EDITORIALS

- "High tension in the Middle East"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" editorializes (07/05) "Ever since Hamas took power, the situation in the Middle East has entered a dangerous stage of deterioration. Its radical position prevents negotiations with Israel from making progress."

"... Israel's tough threats even reached Syrian President Bashar Assad..."

" The fact that Israel has not moved its tanks to the interior of the Gaza Strip and that they are still stationed at the border allows for some hope that there could be an impasse. Otherwise, violence would be unleashed in the Palestinian territories and perhaps in Syria with unpredictable consequences. Then, world peace would be jeopardized. The time has come for other countries to start focusing on their responsibility to help these governments resume peace talks as soon as possible."

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GUTIERREZ